

Ring via Tower Street, bifurcates to become Upper and Lower Galdeford, and concludes that these routeways ‘therefore predate the foundation of the wall’ (2019, p. 64). These are, however, aligned westwards directly onto the outer edge of the ditch. This therefore represents a classic ‘pinch-point’ caused by the convergence of the two routeways towards a single gateway. It is therefore the defences that are primary, not the alignments of the roads.

This is just one reason for holding that the line of these defences, seen as a primary element in the townscape, formed the morphological frame in which the whole town was laid out. These reasons are peremptorily dismissed by Slater with little sign that he has considered the evidence. This is one example of an ‘ensemble’ in action (as at Bridgnorth), where the evidence of the spatial interrelationships between plan forms within a co-functional context can give rise to an

independent historical narrative that is testable against other criteria.

## References

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## Morphology as metaphor: facts and fairy stories

**Terry R. Slater**, School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT, UK. E-mail: [t.r.slater@bham.ac.uk](mailto:t.r.slater@bham.ac.uk)

Haslam (this issue, pp. 166–8) claims that I have misunderstood his ‘metaphor’ or ‘allegory’ and that I am letting different kinds of evidence get in the way of alternative interpretations of the development of medieval town plans. This is despite the fact that I have always championed the necessity of using every kind of evidence in town-plan analysis. His Viewpoint however, is based only on his interpretation of the plot pattern in Bridgnorth (the critical case study) using the 1875 large-scale Ordnance Survey plan. He wishes this to be seen as independent evidence and his interpretation as unchallengeable. On neither count is he correct. The hypotheses (and that is what they are) which both of us have published are of equal value and based on the same evidence. Unless other evidence negates or diminishes one of the hypotheses neither can claim to be the ‘best fit’ solution.

Haslam has provided no additional evidence to counter my critique of his interpretation of the supposed interlocking pattern of plots on the street corners of High Town, Bridgnorth.

For a modest-sized town, Bridgnorth has an exceptional series of plans of the town dating from the mid-seventeenth century onwards. Evidentially, William Smith’s plan of St Leonard’s parish *c.* 1830 is of most significance to the current argument since it shows details of plot boundaries and buildings before nineteenth-century development had got under way and it shows the ownership links between plots and buildings, which the later Ordnance Survey plan does not. It confirms that two of Haslam’s six street corners are dominated by large coaching inn complexes which have removed historical plot boundaries; a third corner was redeveloped

for the very large ‘New Market Buildings’ in the mid-nineteenth century, and a fourth for an impressive new bank building. Both also removed all evidence of the historical plot pattern on these two corners. That leaves only the north side of the junction of St Mary’s Street with High Street displaying the pattern of interlocking plot boundaries which is the basis for Haslam’s hypothesis. His own ‘confirmation bias’ is thereby exposed.

I do not dispute that medieval urban plot patterns on street corners that meet roughly at right angles often display the interlocking pattern noted by Haslam; indeed, I have published a number of examples myself. What I do dispute is that this reflects the original layout of the town, rather than the subsequent evolution of the pattern as land was divided and exchanged to make best commercial use of the properties originally created – a process that Scrase demonstrated in his study of Wells was at its peak in the period between 1250 and 1325 (Scrase, 1989). Nor do I anywhere assert that all ‘burgages were originally of equal size’. My own published examples demonstrate that this was not the case, including in Ludlow (Slater, 1990). However, planned burgages laid out by one land holder, at one time, were usually of equal size.

I am glad to read that we can now agree that the first reference to the building of the town walls of Ludlow was in 1233. Haslam’s reference to the Shropshire Historic Environment Record (SHER, 2018) as evidence for an

earlier rampart and palisade is a travesty of the evidence in the SHER. This is many pages long and the overwhelming tenor of the evidence is that the walls were built over a long period between 1233 and the 1290s; that they were poorly built and seem to be more for controlling access to the town than for defence; that they ‘were not completed on the south side of the town until at least the 1290s’, and that ‘it is not clear either historically or archaeologically whether it replaced an earlier timber palisade’. It also notes that the majority of the surviving wall follows ‘outcropping rock’ with the internal face of the wall hard against the rock up to parapet level. Haslam continues to deny the evidence of historical record, archaeology and cartographic analysis. He tells us fairy stories.

## References

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## Mind the gap

**Ivor Samuels**, Urban Morphology Research Group, University of Birmingham, Birmingham B15 2TT, UK. E-mail: [ivor.samuels@googlemail.com](mailto:ivor.samuels@googlemail.com)

Two days after returning to the UK from the ISUF 2019 Conference in Cyprus I attended an event organized by the Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes (BOB-MK) urban design network. This comprised six presentations under the title of ‘Garden Towns – past, present and

future, a wider perspective’ and dealt with aspects of the current programme of garden towns and villages being promoted as a solution for England’s housing shortage. It was held in Didcot, the site of one of these initiatives (South Oxford District Council, 2017)